

# TRAINING MANUAL ON RIGHTS OF WOMEN

MAY 2024



UNITED NATIONS  
RWANDA



United Nations  
Human Rights

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Swiss Agency for Development  
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# ABOUT THE MANUAL

**The manual seeks to achieve the following objectives:**

- ✓ Increase trainees in-depth understanding of the principles and characteristics of human rights as well as limitations;
- ✓ Increase the trainees 'knowledge on key rights applicable to them,
- ✓ Inform trainees about existing mechanisms for claiming their rights when they are violated.

In general terms, the Manual proposes a participatory methodology in the forms of brainstorming and case studies to be discussed in groups to ensure there is a fruitful interaction between the user of this manual (the trainer) and the participants (trainees).

This manual consists of several components which are designed to ease Facilitators /Trainers in preparing learning activities.

Preparation is crucial in determining the success of the training process. Therefore, facilitators must have full understanding of the objectives of each session, the means of delivery, the tools and materials needed in carrying out the learning activity, the reading materials needed to help manage the discussion, and the key messages that need to be emphasized in each session.

## Instructions to the user of this Manual

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The Trainer shall first ask the participants to define human rights and ask them to define discrimination.



The trainer could ask the participants to discuss on characteristics of human rights (*Universal, inherent, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated*) and give examples.

After writing down the characteristics provided by the participants, the trainer would compare them with the below bullet point notes.



The trainer could ask the participants to discuss on relevance of women's rights as most conventions and treaties protect human beings and women are human beings.

After writing down the characteristics provided by the participants, the trainer would compare them with the below bullet point notes.

**Suggested presentation time:** 60 Minutes

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The trainees/participants understand women's rights and how to claim them in case of violation

**Suggested Training Materials:** The Constitution of Rwanda, the Law on Gender-Based Violence, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and any other human rights documents.

**Suggested format and activities:** Presentation in a bullet point format and brainstorming and group discussions.



# HUMAN RIGHTS OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Definition of Human Rights

- 👉 There is no single Convention or Treaty which defines human rights but human rights focus on human being dignity.

## 1.2. Key Principles of Human Rights

There are three fundamental principles of human rights namely:

- ✓ freedom from discrimination,
- ✓ equality before the law,
- ✓ equal protection of the law.

The **principle of equality** does not require everyone to be treated the same, but simply that people in the same position from a moral point of view should be treated the same.

The **Right to equal protection**: the right of all persons to have the same access to the law and courts, and to be treated equally by the law and courts, both in procedures and in the substance of the law.

Discrimination: any **distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference** which is based on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which has the **purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing** the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.

### 1.3. Characteristics of Human Rights

**Universal:** Human Rights apply to ALL HUMAN BEINGS irrespective of their culture, religion, gender /sex, etc.

**Inherent:** rights do not have to be given, bought, earned, or inherited by people. The rights are inherent because a person is born with them.

**Inalienable:** rights cannot be taken away or you cannot give your rights to someone else.

**Indivisible:** Rights are not in a hierarchical manner. That means, there should be no classification as to which rights are important than others, or must come first before other rights.

**Interrelated:** The violation of a given right can compromise the enjoyment of another right.

*Example:* the violation of the right to health is likely to jeopardize the enjoyment of the right to life.

## 1.4.Limitation and Restrictions of Human Rights

- ✓ The enjoyment of human rights is not absolute. In general, the Law restricts the enjoyment of some rights to protect the rights of other persons (privacy and honor), public order, and security.
- ✓ The enjoyment of human rights is not absolute. In general a state /Government can decide to suspend the enjoyment of certain rights in a state of emergency that would threaten the survival of the country. Examples: Freedom of movement can be restricted in times of emergency by imposing a curfew; the right to education can be restricted in times of emergency when the State declares that all schools shall be closed. Many countries across the Globe closed schools during the outbreak of Covid-19. I, the Law restricts the enjoyment of some rights to protect the rights of other persons (privacy and honor), public order, and security.

# RIGHTS OF WOMEN

## 2.1.Relevance of Women's Rights

- Despite the existence of neutral human rights documents and laws, women continued to continue to face discrimination and violence in the family, in the community, school to name a few because they are women.
- Discrimination against women often leads to violence including but not limited to rape, physical assault, etc.
- Women don't advocate for special rights but rather special protection in terms of non-discrimination and equality between them and men before the Law.

## 2.2. Key rights applicable to women

The following list is not exhaustive.

- **Right to life:** The life of a person must not be taken away arbitrarily because the person is a woman.
- **Right to physical and mental integrity:** A woman must not be assaulted physically or verbally.
- **Right to non-discrimination:** discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably compared to others because she is a woman.
- **Right to non-discrimination:** discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably compared to others because she is a woman.
- **Right to liberty and security:** A woman must not be arrested or detained without any legal reason. In case, it happens he or she has the right to be informed about the reason for the arrest or detention.
- **Right to freedom of expression and opinion:** A woman must be allowed to hold opinions without interference to seek and receive information and impart information of all kinds through any media regardless of frontiers.
- **Right to a fair trial:** A woman is presumed innocent until proven guilty by the court, must be given a legal counsel or lawyer to represent her, must be tried in a reasonable time and defend her case.

- **Right to equal protection of the Law:** the laws have to be applied the same way to all individuals when it comes to protection.
- **Right to a peaceful assembly:** A woman has the right to hold or attend a meeting with other persons.
- **Right to found a family:** A woman like a man has the right to get married or not, the right to seek divorce
- **The right to freedom of association** can be understood as the right of a woman to interact and organize among themselves, collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests.
- **Freedom of movement:** the right of any Rwandan woman to move freely within Rwanda, the right to leave and the right to enter Rwanda.
- **Right to health:** access for a woman to health care, services and goods. The right to health must not be understood as the right to be healthy.
- **Right to work** includes the right of a woman to gain her living by work which she freely chooses or accepts
- **Right to education** means the right of a woman to acquire knowledge and skills which contribute to her personal development, self-reliance and employability and enhance the productivity of her family and community.
- **Right to an adequate standard of living** – A person cannot be denied food and safe drinking water, shelter and clothing because she is a woman.

## 2.3. PROTECTION MECHANISMS

- ✓ A person can report a complaint before the National Commission for Human Rights if she feels that her rights or the rights of her peers have been violated.
- ✓ A Rwandan woman and foreigners living in Rwanda can use the courts if they believe that their rights have not been respected by other individuals or institutions.
- ✓ A Rwandan woman and female foreigners living in Rwanda can report cases of injustice to the Office of the Ombudsman if they believe that they have been victims of injustice.
- ✓ A Woman can also report cases of injustice to the Parliament if they believe that they have been victims of injustice.
- ✓ A Woman who wants to report any human rights violation based on sexual orientation or gender identity to international and regional human rights protection mechanisms can seek advice from non-governmental organisations working on human rights issues or legal practitioners.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 🔗 The Constitution of Rwanda
- 🔗 The Law on Gender-Based Violence,
- 🔗 The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 🔗 The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,
- 🔗 1.The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples 'Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa



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